

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, FR
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: AIR FRANCE SUBSTITUTION OF TORONTO
 FOR MONTREAL

REF: STATE 3L0339

1. AFTER WE INFORMED DGAC OF CAB DECISION REPORTED
REFTEL, DGAC ADVISED US DEC. 28 IT WAS EXTENDING TO
JANUARY 31, 1977 ITS AUTHORIZATION TO TWA TO SERVE
NICE VIA GENEVA. WHEN WE ASKED WHY DGAC WAS BEING LESS
GENEROUS THAN CAB IN NOT EXTENDING TWA AUTHORIZATION
UNTIL MARCH 31, DGAC OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT SHORT-
TERM EXTENSION WAS CONSIDERED DESIRABLE AS "SAFEGUARD
MEASURE" PENDING RECEIPT DEPT.'S REPLY TO FRENCH
EMBASSY NOTE. HE RECALLED THAT NOTE HAD CONTAINED
SECOND REQUEST IN ADDITION TO TORONTO SUBSTITUTION, I.E.,
CO-TERMINAL RIGHTS FOR CHICAGO, WHICH DGAC CONSIDERED
THE MORE IMPORTANT OF THE TWO.

2. TWA REP CONTACTED US DEC. 29 AND EXPRESSED CONCERN
OVER LATENESS OF DGAC APPROVAL AND FACT THAT EXTENSION
WAS LIMITED TO ONLY ONE MONTH. THIS CREATED SERIOUS
OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS FOR TWA, HE SAID, WITH RESULT THAT
TWA CHAIRMAN TILLINGHAST HAD INDICATED HE WOULD
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TERMINATE NICE SERVICE RATHER THAN HAVE TO OPERATE IT
FOR LONG ON BASIS OF PIECEMEAL, SHORT-TERM AUTHORIZA-
TIONS FROM THE FRENCH. WE INFORMED TWA REP OF OUR TALK
WITH DGAC REPORTED ABOVE AND INDICATED THAT SITUATION
WOULD BECOME A LITTLE CLEARER ONCE WE KNEW USG RESPONSE
TO GOF REQUEST FOR CO-TERMINAL RIGHTS AT CHICAGO.WE

SAID IT WAS EVIDENT THAT GOF WAS SEEKING MORE THAN ITS POUND OF FLESH WITH THIS ADD-ON REQUEST TO OFFSET ITS APPROVAL OF NICE VIA GENEVA SERVICE FOR TWA, AND WE COULD JUST NOT TELL AT THIS STAGE IF GOF MIGHT THREATEN TERMINATE TWA AUTHORIZATION IF CHICAGO CO-TERMINAL RIGHTS ARE NOT FORTHCOMING FOR AIR FRANCE. SHOULD DGAC ACT TO TERMINATE AUTHORIZATION OR SHOULD TWA FEEL THAT IT COULD NO LONGER AFFORD TO OPERATE NICE SERVICE ON BASIS OF SHORT-TERM EXTENSIONS OF AUTHORIZATION, WE WONDERED WHETHER TWA MIGHT NOT WANT TO CONSIDER TAKING ITS CASE TO THE PRESS. NICE SERVICE WAS, AFTER ALL, A REOPENED SERVICE THAT BROUGHT BUSINESS TO NICE (MONTE CARLO?) AND ITS AIRPORT, AND THERE WAS LIKELY TO BE SOME OUTCRY FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IF THIS THROUGH SERVICE TO NEW YORK RISKED BEING TERMINATED NOT LONG AFTER IT HAD BEEN REOPENED. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE TO BE HELD THROUGHOUT FRANCE NEXT SPRING AND THE GOF MIGHT THEREFORE NOT BE DISPOSED TO STIR UP LOCAL OPPOSITION NEEDLESSLY, WITH THE RESULT THAT POLITICAL PRESSURES MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN PARIS TO RESOLVE TWA'S NICE PROBLEM IN MORE GENEROUS MANNER THAN IF LEFT TO THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE CIVAIR STAFFERS AT THE DGAC.

3. THIEBLEMONT, ACTING DIRECTOR AT DGAC IN ESPEROUS ABSENCE, TOLD US DEC. 29 THAT HE HAD FAVORED EXTENDING TWA AUTHORIZATION UNTIL MARCH 3L BUT HAD FINALLY HEEDED COUNSEL FROM ITS STAFF THAT IT WOULD BE MORE PRUDENT TO LIMIT AUTHORIZATION TO A SHORTER PERIOD.

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4. COMMENT: WHILE WE FELT IT POLITIC TO COMFORT TWA WITH THE HANDHOLDING DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 ABOVE, WE MUST CONFESS THAT TWA PROFESSIONS OF ANNOYANCE WITH THE FRENCH RING A BIT HOLLOW. AFTER ALL, IT WAS TWA'S OWN DECISION TO FILE FOR THE SERVICE WHEN IT KNEW THAT IT HAD NO TRAFFIC RIGHTS AND TO COMMENCE THE SERVICE ONLY ON THE BASIS OF A LAST-MINUTE, SHORT-TERM AUTHORIZATION.
GAMMON

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